
I. FOREWORD

In 1990, more than 60% of the freeholders within the land area bounded approximately by the Karst Ranch at the north, the Corral Restaurant and Motel on the south, the Park County line and Gallatin Range ridge on the east and the Madison County line on the west, petitioned the Board of County Commissioners of Gallatin County for the creation of a planning and zoning district, and the appointment of an Advisory Committee to prepare a proposed plan and zoning regulation for the district.

According to Montana law (Title 76, Chapter 2, Part 1, MCA), the district was created and an Advisory Committee was appointed by the Gallatin Canyon/Big Sky Zoning Commission. Members of the Advisory Committee were:

Kurt Alt (FWP)*	Shirley Luhrsen
James A. Anderson (resigned)	Donald W. McAndrew
Michael M. Ankeny**	Ken Morton
Richard A. Barton (resigned)	Bill Murdock
Carol L. Collins	Tim Ryan
Bob Dennee (USFS)*	Tom Simkins
Kevin Kelleher	Joe Sabol
John Kircher**	

*Advisory members.

**Rick Gustine and Mike Money represented John Kircher and Michael Ankeny.

This document incorporates the work of that Advisory Committee. It consulted with many land owners and residents, invited the public to attend its meetings, heard several experts in many fields of interest, held a number of informal meetings with interested residents and land owners, and frequently wrote articles about its activities for publication in the *Lone Peak Lookout* and *Big Sky Bugle*. Following a series of interim public hearings, the draft document was revised to assure consistency without significant changes to substance or basic policy content.

This draft is published for review prior to scheduled public hearings to be held by the Gallatin Canyon/Big Sky Zoning Commission. After necessary hearings, public comment, consideration and action by the Zoning Commission, it will be forwarded with recommendations to the Gallatin County Commission for final adoption; along with the proposed Zoning Regulation, Land Use Map, and Capital Improvements Policy.

II. REGIONAL SETTING

The Gallatin Canyon/Big Sky Planning and Zoning District is a unique place, with a tremendous variety of plants and animals. It occupies some of the most rugged and beautiful terrain in the United States.

Portions of the Madison and Gallatin Mountain Ranges are within the area. Those ranges are outstanding examples of uplifted anticlinal folds common to the Rocky Mountains. They were formed primarily through extensive compulsion and related crustal activity, and subsequent erosive action of water and ice.

The major waterways are the Gallatin River, the West Fork, and Porcupine Creek.

The region's climate is controlled primarily by its proximate location to the Continental Divide. Seasonal fluctuations involve occasionally severe winter storms, heavy spring precipitation and warm summer days.

Landscape management zones defined by the U. S. Forest Service for the Gallatin Ranger District are good indicators of ecological systems in the region. These zone associations result directly from the geomorphology, geology, exposure, climate, hydrology and soils of the area.

General profiles of these zones are described in the Multiple Land Use Management Guide for the Gallatin Ranger District (1967), as follows:

General Forest Zone: This zone comprises the broad, mid-elevation areas above which is located the High Area Zone. This zone is generally characterized by a timber cover of lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, spruce, and alpine fir with intermediate high open ridges and intermingling parks of open grassland and sagebrush. Lodgepole pine is the predominant coniferous species type, comprising about 75% of the timber cover. The elevation varies from 5,200 to 8,500 feet.

Crest Zone: This zone extends upward from the General Forest Zone and lies along both the Gallatin-Yellowstone and Gallatin-Madison Divides. A good portion of this zone is characterized by high rugged peaks. The balance is high, open ridges with a scattering of alpine and sub-alpine vegetation types and thinly-timbered basins at the head of streams. This zone is an important producer of water and a regulator of stream flow. In the open basins at the heads of streams, many large snow banks form in depressions, water courses, on the north sides of steep banks and escarpments and on the lee side of windbreaks. This zone is very scenic, offering exceptionally beautiful panoramic views from the high, open ridges.

Water Influence Zone: This is best described as generally following the Gallatin River and its principal tributaries, and as such, it transects other zones. The zone is usually irregular in depth, depending on the water environment and the character of the terrain and vegetation. The growing season, climatic conditions, soil characteristics, and topography are generally the same as the zone or zones through which it passes. The differences which may exist are usually caused by the proximity to water and the moisture available to shoreline vegetation.

III. EXISTING LAND USES

The Gallatin Canyon\Big Sky Zoning District, because of its location and mountainous terrain and its limited population, has a distinct land use pattern.

The area is predominately forested, with the Forest Service having jurisdiction over a substantial portion of the District. This jurisdiction includes fire protection, garbage and waste disposal, the granting of grazing and logging permits, wildlife habitat management, visitor accommodations and control, and range and forest maintenance. These forest lands are utilized for timber, water, wildlife, grazing, and recreation.

The strongest defining features of the District are the steep, heavily timbered mountain slopes and the Gallatin River. The mountains constrain access, while providing ideal opportunities for recreation. The topography creates separate distinct identities for the different regions of the District.

Commercial activities in the Gallatin Canyon area are located alongside U.S. Highway 191. A substantial commercial area is located at the junction of U.S. Highway 191 and the Big Sky Spur Road. The commercial uses are mainly tourist-oriented facilities (bars, restaurants, mini-marts, fly fishing shops, antique shops, etc).

Commercial activities in the Big Sky section of the District are limited to the Meadow Village Center and another commercial area adjacent to the Big Sky Spur Road. The commercial uses are resident and tourist oriented, and include restaurants, a general store, the post office, and real estate offices.

Residential areas in the Canyon are located along U.S. 191, and also in several subdivisions located in adjacent drainages such as Beaver Creek. There has been a minimal amount of development on hillsides that overlook the Gallatin River.

Residential areas in the Big Sky area range from condominium developments to large lots with single family homes. The condominium developments are mainly located in the center of the Meadow Village, with the single family residential areas radiating out from the area.

Agricultural usage within the planning area is limited primarily to grazing activities. Most of the acreage in agricultural use produces feed for livestock. In the Canyon, this forage crop is generally used for on-site grazing practice. Both the Forest Service and private landowners issue grazing permits to allow their land to be used as pasture by others. Other than limited grazing use, there are virtually no agricultural uses within the District.

Recreational opportunities in the District are abundant. Downhill and cross country skiing are both available. There are miles of multi-use trails. Hunting, fishing, camping,

and back-packing are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. A golf course is popular in the summer season.

Housing

The District exhibits one of the typical problems of resort communities: assuring affordable housing for seasonal and permanent employees. As more visitors arrive and as more part time residents make the District their home, housing has gotten bigger and more expensive. Year round, long time residents find that opportunities are becoming difficult for their children to stay in the District. Business owners that depend on the tourism economy have nowhere to house their employees and their families.

Ideally, employee/affordable housing should be an integral part of the community. Without the opportunity to buy property in a resort community, the work force is denied a sense of ownership and investment within the community. Workers can be transported from outside the community but then may lack community loyalty.

The Advisory Committee recognized that a range of affordable housing types are needed in the District, from seasonal employee accommodations to affordable rental units to low cost single family housing. The land use plan delineates areas for employee/affordable housing. The zoning regulation includes housing incentives.

IV. DISTRICT HISTORY

The District has a rich history. At various times, District residents have included Native Americans, explorers, hunters, trappers, ranchers, loggers and miners. The last of the tribal Native Americans to occupy the Gallatin Canyon were Sheepeaters; remnants of their wickiups (huts) have been estimated to be 160 years old.

Captain Clark of the Lewis and Clark expedition passed by the mouth of the Gallatin Canyon. Because of its proximity to the natural wonders of what is now Yellowstone Park, the Gallatin Canyon was used as a route by early explorers, including John Colter after he left the Lewis and Clark expedition. In the 1800s, Theodore Roosevelt organized a party to visit these Yellowstone wonders, and camped at Beaver Creek a few days to resolve logistic and personnel problems.

Hunters and trappers came during the early 1800s, taking beaver and other pelts. They were followed by miners, who fanned out from Bannock and Virginia City, to find small veins of gold along the Gallatin River tributaries. One miner, Levinski, became a legend after turning himself in to the Sheriff for killing two "claim jumpers". After being released on the ground of "self-defense", Levinski transferred his claim to a friend's wife and disappeared.

Loggers extended operations steadily southward, dragging logs by horse and mule to the river and floating them down to Salesville for cutting into lumber. A few homesteaders tried farming, and some of their irrigation ditches and rusting equipment now attest to their failure.

Beginning in the 1870s, settlers established ranches for cattle and horses. The Anxiousnais (later anglicized to Anceney) family put together the Flying D Ranch, which consisted of 400,000 acres. The Flying D was the world's largest ranch, and extended from the Gallatin River to the Madison River and to south of Helena.

Some of the ranches became dude ranches as Easterners came to view the wonders of the Wild West. Other Easterners bought ranches for their own use and to raise polo ponies. At one time, the Butler family of Chicago owned the Backward B-K (now the Lone Mountain Ranch). A prominent resident of the area, Dr. Caroline McGill, was a pathology professor from Missouri who practiced medicine in Butte. She established a patient rehabilitation center at the 320 Ranch and donated the funds necessary to build the first Ophir School. That first school was on the east side of the road, now U.S. Highway 191, just north of Porcupine Creek.

Yellowstone National Park drew ever-increasing numbers of visitors, and railroads competed for the tourist business by extending their lines. Union Pacific, the first railroad into Montana, transported tourists by stagecoach from Monida to the west entrance. The Union Pacific lost trade to the Northern Pacific when that railroad extended a branch line from Livingston to Gardiner. The Union Pacific then extended a branch line from Ashton, Idaho, to the west entrance, where the community of West Yellowstone was established.

As part of Congressional legislation to aid construction of rail lines, the Northern Pacific was given title to forty sections of land per mile, while the Union Pacific received twenty sections per mile. The railroads received every other section of land, in a checkerboard pattern, within several miles of their rights-of-way. Many years later these lands were conveyed to timber cutting subsidiaries of the railroads. The resultant public-private checkerboard ownership pattern can be seen on Forest Service maps.

The Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad also played a part in local history. The railroad built a spur line from Bozeman Hot Springs to a hotel and terminal building in Salesville. Salesville residents were persuaded to change the town name to Gallatin Gateway. Karst Ranch was contracted to provide tour bus service to West Yellowstone and through Yellowstone Park. The railroad advertised its service as "The Gallatin Gateway Route through Yellowstone". The service was begun in the Summer of 1929 and continued through the 1930s. By then automobiles were allowed into the Park and visitors were abandoning railroads.

Although logging and ranch roads had snaked their way up the Canyon to the Taylor Fork, there was no road through to West Yellowstone until the early 1900s. At that time, Gallatin County received approval from Yellowstone Park to build a road through the Park to West Yellowstone. That road became U.S. Highway 191.

What may have been the first mechanical ski lift in Montana was operated just off U.S. Highway 191. Karst Ranch operated a cable powered ski tow at the base of the mountain to the west of the Ranch. The tow served both downhill skiers and jumpers and opened in 1936. The last day of its operation was December 7, 1941. Many of the those who used the ski tow went into military service immediately and served in the armed forces in World War II.

Soldiers Chapel, located near the Big Sky Spur Road, was built to honor those whose lives had been given in defense of their country. The memorial was developed by the Story family to honor their son, Lt. Nelson Story III, and other area residents who served and died in World War II.

The Gallatin River and its tributaries gradually became famous for its trout fishing, drawing fishermen from near and far. One fisherman, a student at Montana State University, fished the West Branch and never forgot his impression of the beauty of the valley with Lone Peak as its backdrop. That impression stayed with him as he pursued a most successful career as a radio and television news commentator-- the senior member of the famous "Huntley-Brinkley" team.

In the late 1960s, Chet Huntley's vision of a winter and summer resort began to emerge into potential reality. Led by Chrysler Realty Corporation, planning for the Big Sky Resort began. Land was acquired by purchase and trade-- the latter often in three-way agreements among Big Sky, Burlington Northern (successor to Northern Pacific Railroad) and the United States Forest Service.

A. The Big Sky, Inc. "Master Plan"

When Chet Huntley's dream came to fruition, Big Sky project managers prepared a "master plan". Many current property owners in the Big Sky community purchased their property with the belief that land use designations on that map were accurate and binding representations of future development.

Since that "master plan" was hung on area realtors' and developers' walls, several projects were built contrary to the land use designations on the "master plan". In 1988 and 1989, during public hearings for Pinewood Hills Subdivision conducted by the Gallatin County Commissioners, Big Sky residents realized that the 1972 "master plan" had not been officially adopted or recognized according to the procedures set forth in Montana statutes. As noted in the Foreword, the statutorily mandated process to form a planning and zoning district was begun shortly thereafter.

Many people who assisted in the creation of the planning and zoning district did so with the intent to transfer the 1972 "master plan" to this plan. The 1972 "master plan" was used as a starting point for discussions and considered when this land use plan was formulated. Other factors that were considered included development that has occurred in the Gallatin Canyon and Big Sky, Forest Service plans and existing covenants on private property.

B. 1972 Gallatin Canyon Study

In February of 1971, the Gallatin County Board of County Commissioners initiated a study of the Gallatin Canyon. Prepared by the Murray-McCormick Environmental Group, the report, entitled "Gallatin Canyon Report" was completed in 1972. Copies of that report were made available to the members of the 1990 Advisory Committee. That study is herein referred to as the "1972 report", and sections of it follow.

The Advisory Committee found the 1972 report useful in providing information concerning the environment-- climate, soil, forests, surface and subsurface water and stream flow, geology, wildlife, botany, air quality, etc.-- that can be relied upon as still true. Other information, particularly demographic information, was less useful because of the great changes in land use and population that have taken place since 1972. In particular, the creation of the Big Sky Ski and Resort complex, in and around the area from Lone Peak (in Madison County) to the confluence of the West Fork of the Gallatin River and the Gallatin River, and the resulting changes in infrastructure and the influx of residents, vacationers, employees and business establishments, have largely made obsolete the demographic information in the 1972 report. For that reason, a considerable amount of updating has been done to develop this plan.

V. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

1986 and 1988 Bank Feasibility Studies. In 1986, a group of interested investors received a feasibility analysis relating to the establishment of a bank in Big Sky, and that analysis was updated in 1988. Those investors established the Big Sky Western Bank, which made a copy of the analyses available to the Advisory Committee. The following information has been abstracted from those analyses:

Population. Because Big Sky is not incorporated, there is no census or other official population count, but the study attempted to establish a population of the proposed bank's "primary service area". The primary service area is somewhat larger than the District as it included: (a) Mountain Village in Madison County; (b) the Gallatin Canyon from its mouth to Karst Ranch; and (c) the Gallatin Canyon from Rainbow Ranch to the north boundary of Yellowstone National Park.

Various methods were used to estimate population; and included the number of electric utility meters in service, number of registered voters, average daily vehicle counts on certain sections of road, number of sewer hook-ups, typical wastewater flow in areas served by RID 305, number of telephone connections, and postal patronage. Based on those evaluations, the study estimated the population of the "primary service area" as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>
1986	1,269
1987	1,307
1988	1,346
1989	1,386
1990	1,428
1991	1,428

The Advisory Committee has no reason to question the foregoing estimates, and considers them to be the best available at the time. However, it must be noted that: [1] the study area was somewhat larger than the District; and [2] the studies did not separate the estimated population to distinguish among permanent residents, part-time residents, seasonal residents, absentee owners and casual vacationers, although some demographic information was developed, as discussed below. Some error is inherent in those estimates.

Population Growth. Perhaps more significant to the Advisory Committee than the estimates of population were the growth factors shown in the two analyses. Examples are:

Year	Electric Meters	Registered Voters*	Vehicle Count**	Wastewater Flow	Resident Phones	Business Phones
1980				316	59	
1981	827		849		386	86
1982	851				449	80
1983	893		1,040		508	77
1984	913				600	88
1985	935		1,390		695	100
1986	963	344		137,363	731	111
1987	1,001		1,600		642	120
1988		396		199,503	685***	142

* Includes only voters registered in Precinct 37 Big Sky

** Counts taken on Spur between 191 and Meadow Village

*** Does not include unlisted telephones, which increased from 80 in 1986 to 120 in 1988.

According to the 1988 analysis; recent annual growth rates were 3.9% for electric meter installations, 14.6% for residential telephones and 17.6% for business telephones.

Demographic Information. The 1986 analysis included the results of responses to a questionnaire mailed in September, 1986, revealing the following information about those who responded:

■ 77% were full-time residents; 14% were primarily summer residents; 4% were primarily winter residents, and 5% were "other". It was felt that winter residents were under represented because of the timing of the survey.

■ 56% were employed full-time; 16% employed part-time or seasonally; 21% retired; and 7% "other".

■ As to household income, 10% were under \$ 10,000; 19% were from \$ 10,000 to \$ 15,000; 24% were from \$ 15,000 to \$ 25,000; 20% were from \$ 25,000 to \$40,000; and 27% were over \$ 40,000.

■ Mailing addresses of the 970 members of the Big Sky Owners Association are shown in the table below:

Big Sky	97
Gallatin County	68
Montana	207
Out of State	598

States represented were:

Minnesota	112
California	66
North Dakota	54
Illinois	53
Other	313

Non-resident BSOA members indicated an average of 27 days per year residence in Big Sky and an average household income in excess of \$ 40,000.

■ The Big Sky area has over 1,000 rooms for rent. This figure includes hotel, condominium, and hostel rooms. Since the 1988 study, a new convention center in Mountain Village was opened in 1990. Growth of resort operations was reflected in the following statistics supplied by Boyne USA:

EMPLOYEE GROWTH: BOYNE USA	
Summer 1981	90 employees
Summer 1986	125 employees
Winter 1981	240 employees
Winter 1985	330 employees
Winter 1991	500+ employees

Ski Season	Skier Days
1981/82	107,000
1982/83	131,000
1983/84	136,000
1984/85	140,000
1985/86	127,000
1986/87	Not Available
1987/88	164,000
1988/89	187,000
1989/90	213,000
1990/91	231,000

This steady growth is the result of several factors. First, there was an excellent early snow base and continuing good snow conditions throughout the 1990/91 season. Second, expert slopes were made accessible by the newly opened Challenger chairlift. Third, the Southern Comfort lift opened in late Winter, 1991. Fourth, five new runs opened on the south face of Andesite Mountain. Finally, during the summer and fall of 1991, the Ramshead double chairlift on Andesite Mountain was replaced by a high-speed quad lift called RamCharger, much enhancing the ability to serve all runs on Andesite.

■ The 1986 analysis included a survey of businesses other than those of Boyne USA, which in addition to operating the ski resort and related hotel/restaurant complex also operates several other businesses under a variety of names. Responses of 24 non-Boyne businesses revealed:

- 4% had annual sales less than \$ 10,000;
- 8% had annual sales between \$ 10,000 and \$ 25,000;
- 4% had annual sales between \$ 25,000 and \$ 50,000;
- 21% had annual sales between \$ 50,000 and \$ 100,000;
- 42% had annual sales between \$ 100,000 and \$ 500,000; and
- 21% had annual sales over \$ 500,000.

Fifty-five total businesses responding to other questions indicated that they had 289 full time and 334 part-time or seasonal employees. The smallest was a one-person operation; the largest employed 60 during the ski season. The average number of full-time employees was 5.3; the average number of part-time employees was 6.1.

Questionnaire. The Advisory Committee developed a questionnaire to ask people within the District their opinions about a plan and zoning regulation. This questionnaire was distributed to members of the Big Sky Owners Association, was mailed to as many other residents of the District as could be ascertained, and was published in the *Lone Peak Lookout*. The questionnaire responses are summarized in Appendix "A".